

Blytheville Courier News

Since 1890 • Blytheville, Arkansas

MONDAY

October 11, 2004



Keiser Fire Chief Ron Hallett signs for his department's new automatic external defibrillator during a presentation ceremony conducted at Baptist Memorial Hospital-Blytheville. Mississippi County received grant funding from the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services to purchase defibrillators for nine rural fire departments. Also pictured are (from left) Keiser Mayor Debbie Cissell, first responder program coordinator Kevin Jackson, county Judge Steve McGuire and Mississippi County Office of the Emergency Services coordinator David Lendennie.

Pat Ivey/Courier News

FIRE DEPARTMENT IMPROVEMENTS

First responders receive defibrillators

By PAT IVEY

Blytheville Courier News

Mississippi County fire department first responders were presented with automatic electronic defibrillators during a ceremony conducted at Baptist Memorial Hospital-Blytheville.

According to David Lendennie, Mississippi County Office of Emergency Services, and Kevin Jackson, first responder program coordinator, the AEDs were purchased through an Arkansas Department of Health grant program aimed at building a statewide AED coalition in

rural areas. Fire departments were required to have certified first responders who were AED trained on staff and to be a certain distance from a hospital in order to receive the grant funding.

Mississippi County Judge Steve McGuire congratulated fire department representatives as he assisted in passing out the defibrillators.

"I know how much time you have invested in getting to be a first responder. Most people don't think about that. Then you give your time to help others, and you give your time to stay a first responder. You are one reason it is a great day to be

in Mississippi County."

Jackson told firefighters Mississippi County is leading the state in building its first responder program. He said most officials in Little Rock and other areas are amazed when they hear about the volunteer emergency response programs currently operating in Mississippi County.

"A lot of folks may say bad things about the northeast corner of the state, but we can sit here, mind our own business, and know we are doing the right thing," he said.

Shawn Perrin, Baptist ambulance service supervisor, also congratulated the firefight-

ers on their spirit of volunteerism within their communities.

"To leave your home and your job to help someone you don't even know is not in most people's nature," he said. "It's extraordinary. You people are extraordinary. This program has become something that is marketable, that we can use to attract new businesses to the county. We are saving people's lives, and that is because of you people."

Fire departments receiving the AEDs were Keiser, Dyess, Burdette, Milligan Ridge, Dell, Etowah, Manila, Armored-Huffman and Joiner.